

State of Illinois Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Summary Information

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	Matt Schmit (broadband@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	1
Funding Opportunity Title	Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption and Digital Equity Community Technology Center Grant Program
CSFA Number	420-35-2496
CSFA Popular Name	Broadband READY CTC Grant Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	5
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$250,000
Award Range	\$1 - \$50000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	Yes
Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	07/14/2021
Application Date Range	07/14/2021 - 10/04/2021 : 5:00pm
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/AboutDCEO/GrantOpportunities/Pages/2496-1978.aspx
Technical Assistance Session	No

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Broadband READY: Community Technology Center Grant Program 2496-1978

A. Program Description

1. Background

30 ILCS 780 et seq. authorizes the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to award grants from the Digital Divide Elimination Fund to qualified applicants to establish educational and economic development initiatives that will bridge the digital divide, making possible a society in which all individuals can benefit from the opportunities provided by new technology.

The Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption and Digital Equity (READY): Community Technology Center Grant Program seeks to maximize the impact of the Connect Illinois broadband investment and related programming by driving regional collaboration – for engagement, evaluation, planning, and progress.

In addition, the program will add context and contour to broadband access mapping that is currently underway for the Illinois Office of Broadband to ensure a comprehensive approach to eliminating the digital divide through advances in broadband access, adoption, and utilization.

2. Definitions

For purposes of this grant program, the follows terms are given specific meaning:

- **Broadband Access** refers to the availability of basic broadband service, currently defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as wireline service of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload.
- **Broadband Adoption** refers to daily access to the Internet: at speeds, quality and capacity necessary to accomplish common tasks; with the digital skills necessary to participate online; and on a personal device and secure, convenient network.
- **Broadband Utilization** refers to how broadband is used by individual households, businesses, or community anchor institutions – be it for improved quality of life, employment or commercial opportunities, economic development, or any number of related applications in areas such as distance learning, telehealth, or precision agriculture.
- **Community Technology Centers** provides computer access and educational services using information technology. Community technology centers are diverse in the populations they serve and programs they offer, but similar in that they provide technology access to individuals, communities, and populations that typically would not otherwise have places to use computer and telecommunications technologies.
- **Connect Illinois Digital Navigator Network** consists of personnel from various organizations and agencies throughout the state who have received standardized, best-practice training to provide

comprehensive digital literacy coaching and instruction to community members seeking information and guidance on broadband connectivity, devices, and digital skills.

- **Connect Illinois Computer Equity Network** provides qualified Community Technology Centers and households on a means-tested basis with access to fully refurbished computers and related services and programming through partnership with the State of Illinois, philanthropy, and various local and regional stakeholders.

3. Description

The Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption and Digital Equity (READY): Community Technology Center Grant Program seeks to provide a roadmap to eliminating the digital divide through regional collaboration over broadband access, adoption, and utilization. This work will leverage and add value to the Illinois Office of Broadband and its Connect Illinois program, including the emerging Connect Illinois Computer Equity Network and Connect Illinois Digital Navigator Network.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is designed to promote planning, establishment, administration, and expansion of Community Technology Centers in pursuit of eliminating the digital divide. The purposes of the grants shall include, but not be limited to: program volunteer recruitment and management; training and instruction; broadband infrastructure; and related goods and services, including case management, administration, personal information management, and outcome-tracking tools and software.

In particular, the competitive grant program will promote collaboration within regions to eliminate the digital divide through a comprehensive approach to broadband access, adoption, and utilization. The program will leverage funding, strategic partnerships, and expert consultation to improve broadband-related programming, evaluation, and planning through cross-sector collaboration.

The program will align local and regional efforts to close the digital divide by forging and strengthening partnerships, identifying current conditions, and establishing baseline metrics for tracking progress. The program will elevate and expand best practice approaches and engage key stakeholders toward shared goals in broadband access, adoption, and utilization – key factors contributing to the digital divide, and the elimination thereof.

Moreover, the program will identify digital inequities and opportunities for Community Technology Center expansion and optimal broadband utilization through regionwide collaboration involving a representative *Broadband READY Team* (“Team”) including but not limited to: organizations such as public hospitals, libraries, and park districts; community technology nonprofits; higher education researchers; regional planners; community and economic development professionals; and community leaders and other stakeholders.

To establish current conditions, guide programming, and facilitate progress reporting, each Team will produce a *Broadband READY Digital Divide Elimination Plan*. The plan will detail short term efforts and longer-term planning toward eliminating the digital divide, including: collaborative approaches to Community Technology Center expansion through the equitable distribution of refurbished computers; development of digital navigator capacity; and progress on broadband access, adoption, and utilization.

Through this planning and related collaboration, each Team will identify how Community Technology Center expansion can best serve communities of need within its region. Specifically, each Team will seek to work with communities in which not less than 40% of the students are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch

under the national school lunch program or in which not less than 30% of the students are eligible for a free lunch under the national school lunch program.

To ensure Community Technology Center access in public areas, each project is expected to demonstrate computer access and educational services using information technology to the public at one or more of its educational buildings or facilities at least 12 hours each week.

Grantees may direct their grant funding toward one or more of the following areas, which may require additional nonstate funding to complete in full:

- Program volunteer recruitment and management;
- Training and instruction; broadband infrastructure; and
- Related goods and services, including case management, administration, personal information management, and outcome-tracking tools and software

Grantees will comprise the second Broadband READY: Community Technology Center cohort for regional broadband engagement and evaluation.

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by Public Act 101-0637. The Broadband READY: Community Technology Center Program may award grants in amounts up to \$50,000 for eligible applicants. As much as \$250,000 will be available in direct grants through this NOFO.

Applicants must submit a project narrative that describes in detail the activities to be carried out under the award (how the awarded funds will be used). The project narrative must include enough information for DCEO to understand the scope of the project, clarification of activities to be covered by the budget – including a detailed breakdown of said activities associated with each utilized line item category of the budget – and any additional necessary detail to enable DCEO to manage the grant agreement activity against planned project performance. A detailed breakdown of the project tasks and the project timeline is also required. The Project Narrative must additionally include descriptions of how the applicant's project would meet the criteria as defined in Section E1.

The release of this NOFO does not obligate the Department to make an award.

C. Eligibility Information

An entity may not apply for a grant until the entity has registered and pre-qualified through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal found at www.grants.illinois.gov, Grantee Links tab. During pre-qualification, verifications are performed including a check of federal Debarred and Suspended and status on the Illinois Stop Payment List.

The GATA Grantee Portal will verify that the entity:

- Has a valid FEIN number;
- Has a valid DUNS number;
- Has a current SAM.gov account;

- Is not on the Federal Excluded Parties List;
- Is in Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State, as applicable;
- Is not on the Illinois Stop Payment list; and
- Is not on the Department of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Sanctions list.

An automated email notification to the entity alerts them of “qualified” status or informs how to remediate a negative verification (e.g., inactive DUNS, not in good standing with the Secretary of State). A federal Debarred and Suspended status cannot be remediated.

Pursuant to the policy of the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, to receive grant funds from the State of Illinois, a grantee must be considered a regarded entity by the IRS for federal income tax purposes. Disregarded entities will not be eligible to receive grant funds.

1. Eligible Applicants include:

Public hospitals, libraries, park districts, and state educational agencies, local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, senior citizen homes, and other public and private nonprofit or for-profit agencies and organizations.

The Department complies with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity including, but not limited to: The Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.), The Public Works Employment Discrimination Act (775 ILCS 10/1 et seq.), The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) (42 USC 2000a-and 2000H-6), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794), The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.), and The Age Discrimination Act (42 USC 6101 et seq.).

2. Cost Sharing or Matching.

The Broadband READY: Community Technology Center Grant Program requires matching funds and/or in-kind contribution that is equal to or greater than the grant award. Documentation to validate the availability of matching funds and/or in-kind contribution is required as part of the application. Such commitments must be documented in writing by an authorized representative of the applicant or third-party organization making the commitment.

3. Indirect Cost Rate.

In order to charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant organization must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRAs:

- a) Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding, may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. Illinois will accept the federally negotiated rate. The organization must provide a copy of the federally NICRA.
- b) State Negotiated Rate. The organization may negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have a Federally Negotiated Rate. If an organization has not previously established in indirect cost rate, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted through State of

Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system no later than three months after receipt of a Notice of State Award (NOSA). If an organization previously established an indirect cost rate, the organization must annually submit a new indirect cost proposal through CARS within six to nine months after the close of the grantee's fiscal year, depending on the grantee's audit type requirements.

c) De Minimis Rate. An organization may elect a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the De Minimis Rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDC annually in order to accept the De Minimis Rate.

All grantees must complete an indirect cost rate negotiation or elect the De Minimis Rate to claim indirect costs. Indirect costs claimed without a negotiated rate or a De Minimis Rate election on record in the State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system may be subject to disallowance.

Grantees have discretion and can elect to waive payment for indirect costs. Grantees that elect to waive payments for indirect costs cannot be reimbursed for indirect costs. The organization must record an election to "Waive Indirect Costs" into the State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system.

State Universities may request an indirect cost rate of 10% due to the State of Illinois' continuous funding of a portion of facility and administrative costs.

4. Other, if applicable.

N/A

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package.

Grant application forms are available at the web link provided in the "Grant Application Link" field of this announcement or by contacting the Program Manager:

Illinois Office of Broadband
Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
500 E Monroe Street, 8th Floor
Springfield, IL 62791
Tele: 217-782-5968
Email: broadband@illinois.gov

2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

A standard application package must be submitted to and reviewed by DCEO. Each package must contain the following items:

1. Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format. (print, sign and scan signature page with submission)

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2. Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project. The entire budget with all worksheets included even if the worksheets are not relevant to the grant opportunity must be submitted with the application materials. (print, sign and scan signature page with submission)
3. Conflict of Interest Disclosure
4. Mandatory Disclosures

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the submission of the following other programmatic specific items:

5. Cover Letter
6. Application Information (see below)
7. W-9

Applications should be no longer than eight pages using standard fonts, font sizes, and line spacing (excluding Applicant biographies, financial statements, other legal documents, and letters of support) and contain the following information:

- a) an executive summary;
- b) a description of the applicant demonstrating that the applicant is located within an eligible community and that the applicant is eligible to apply for a grant;
- c) a description of the applicant including:
 - 1) a description of the organization and location of the applicant agency;
 - 2) a description of the services typically provided;
 - 3) a description of the technological infrastructure already in place;
 - 4) a description of the populations typically served;
 - 5) a description of actual related performance of the applicant, as compared to outcome objectives specified in past State or federal grants for related purposes; and
 - 6) a description of the level of community support for the applicant;
- d) a description of the technology-related needs of the targeted community, including:
 - 1) a description of what the needs are;
 - 2) a description of how needs were determined, including methods used to collect community input; and
 - 3) a description of existing community resources addressing those needs;

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- e) a description of the activities proposed by the applicant to be undertaken during the period of performance of the grant to address the needs;
- f) a schedule for the implementation of proposed activities;
- g) measurable outcome objectives to be achieved during the period of performance for the grant;
- h) a budget requesting grant funds for allowable costs and a justification for all costs requested;
- i) a description of the education and related experience of key project personnel; and
- j) a description of the applicant's participation in related programs

Completed applications and all required supporting documentation must be received by the application deadline to be deemed eligible for funding.

Applications should be no longer than eight pages using standard fonts, font sizes, and line spacing (excluding Applicant biographies, financial statements, other legal documents, and letters of support)

The paper copies of the completed application packages with all associated documentation must fit on 8.5" x 11" paper. This size restriction includes all paper copy versions of maps and tables.

3. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM).

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. To establish a SAM registration, go to www.SAM.gov and/or utilize this instructional link: How to Register in SAM from the www.grants.illinois.gov Resource Links tab.
- (ii) Provide a valid DUNS number in its application, which matches the DUNS number used in both the applicant entity's SAM registration and its GATA registration; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. The Department will not make a Federal pass-through or State award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Department is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the Department may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal pass-through or State award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal pass-through or State award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times.

All applications must be received on or before the application deadline of:

October 4, 2021 5:00 PM CST

Failure to meet the application deadline may result in the Department returning application without review or may preclude the Department from making the award

5. Intergovernmental Review, if applicable.

N/A

6. Funding Restrictions.

This program does not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

7. Other Submission Requirements.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/120581a9c57345ca9dfed2c27d79c6a6>.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

The Illinois Office of Broadband will award grants to projects that help eliminate the digital divide and advance the Connect Illinois vision through regional engagement and evaluation. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a merit-based review committee led by the Illinois Office of Broadband and consisting of other program team members. This committee will use the following criteria and associated point values (100 points possible) to assist in systematically scoring applications and awarding grants. These criteria will be applied to information provided by the applicant in response to the requirements of this NOFO. To ensure that an application receives the highest possible scoring, please be sure to provide complete and comprehensive responses for all information requested.

To be considered a qualified applicant, an organization must comply with all of the specifications and respond to all items listed within the application instructions.

Evaluation Criteria:

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- a) Need of the Eligible Community (25%): In determining relative need, the Department shall consider the following factors:

- 1) economic need in each target community, as evidenced by the proportion of local youth eligible for reduced cost, or free lunches under the National School Lunch Program; and
 - 2) the level of access to technology of the populations to be served by the applicant.
- b) Quality of the Proposal (25%): The Department shall examine the overall quality of the activities and programs provided by the applicant. In making this judgment the Department shall consider:
- 1) the range, nature, and volume of activities to be undertaken, or proposed to be undertaken;
 - 2) the measurable performance outcomes proposed by the applicant;
 - 3) the past success of the applicant; and
 - 4) the qualifications of staff assigned to deliver project activities.
- c) Community Support (25%): The Department shall consider overall level of community support for the applicant's proposal. In making this judgment the Department shall consider:
- 1) the amount of local community input received by the applicant in the design and operation of the proposed services; and
 - 2) the level of financial support received by the applicant from private/non-governmental sources.
- d) Cost (25%): The Department shall examine the reasonableness of costs relative to the type of expenses being proposed.
- e) Geographic Distribution of Awards: Along with the other criteria listed in this Section, the Director of the Department shall consider the geographic distribution of awards throughout the State when making final decisions regarding grant awards.

2. Review and Selection Process.

Applications will be graded using the merit-based review process and scored on the criteria specified in Section E.1. The Department will designate a merit-based review committee to grade each application received for this funding opportunity. The final score of each committee member will be calculated and an average of all scores will be the final grantee score. Each applicant will then be ranked by their score and assigned to one of the established 10 economic development regions of the state to ensure geographic balance. Only applications garnering at least 50 percent of the maximum score will be considered for funding.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal. However, competitive grant appeals are limited to the evaluation process. Evaluation scores may not be protested. Only the evaluation

process is subject to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Department within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published. The written appeal shall include the name and address of the appealing party, the identification of the grant and a statement of reasons for the appeal. To file an appeal, applicants must submit the appeal in writing and in accordance with the Merit-Based Application Review Appeals Process listed on the Grant Opportunities page of the DCEO website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/AboutDCEO/GrantOpportunities/Pages/MeritAppReview.aspx>.

3. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable.

The Department anticipates sending Notices of State Award (NOSA) by approximately September 15, 2021, but reserves the right to issue a reduced award, or not to issue any award.

F. Award Administration Information

1. State Award Notices.

The Notice of State Award (NOSA) will specify the funding terms and specific conditions resulting from the pre-award risk assessments and the merit-based review process. The NOSA must be accepted (electronically signed) in the GATA Portal by an authorized representative of the grantee organization. The NOSA is not an authorization to begin performance or incur costs.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

COVID-19 Requirements: Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, to be eligible to receive an award, grant applicants are required to adhere to “social distancing” and all applicable executive orders issued by the Governor of Illinois, rules issued by an Illinois state agency, or other directives and/or guidance issued by Illinois state agencies related to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. These same requirements will apply to grantees in carrying out the activities in the award throughout the award term.

Grant Uniform Requirements: The Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/1 *et seq.*) (and its related administrative rules, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000), was enacted to increase the accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds from whatever source and to reduce administrative burdens on both State agencies and grantees by adopting federal guidance and regulations applicable to those grant funds; specifically, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200).

Procurement: Grantees will be required to adhere to methods of procurement per the Procurement Standards (2 CFR 200.317 – 2 CFR 200.327).

3. Reporting.

Periodic Performance Report (PPR) and Periodic Financial Report (PFR)

Grantees funded through this NOFO are required to submit in the format required by the Grantor, at least on a quarterly basis, the PPR and PFR electronically to their assigned grant manager. The first of such reports shall cover the first three months after the award begins.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.328, Periodic Financial Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.329, Periodic Performance Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Any additional reporting requirements will be disclosed in the NOSA.

Grantees are required within 60 calendar days following the end of the period of performance to submit a final closeout report in the format required by the Grantor (See 2 CFR 200.344).

Monitoring

Grantees funded through this NOFO are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits by the Department in accordance with 2 CFR 200.337. They must have an open-door policy allowing periodic visits by Department monitors to evaluate the progress of the project and provide documentation upon request of the monitor. Program staff will also maintain contact with participants and monitor progress and performance of the contracts. The Department may modify grants based on performance.

Audit

Grantees shall be subject to Illinois' statewide Audit Report Review requirements. Terms of the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 USC 7501-7507), Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200, and the audit rules set forth under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act shall apply (See 30 ILCS 708/65(c)).

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Any questions or issues with this NOFO and/or application may be address to:

Illinois Office of Broadband
Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
500 E. Monroe Street, 8th Floor
Springfield, IL 62701
Phone: 217-782-5968

Email: broadband@illinois.gov

H. Other Information, if applicable

None.